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the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 44



Fourteenth Year

December 12, 1947

The Commission on Human Rights and Freedom of Religion

Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, Associate Director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, reports as follows on the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations Organisations meeting at the present time in Geneva for its second session (see also E.P.S. No. 36):

"Much of the initial discussion revolved about the relative merits of a Declaration and a Convention. The former would merely set forth general statements of the rights to be recognised and would carry only moral weight. The latter would be more specific and would include in it the terms whereby its provisions could be enforced. Without commitment as to final action, the Commission voted to divide into three working parties to deal with a declaration, a convention, and implementation.

"The Commission had before it a number of proposals for an Article on freedom of religion; the quotations here following will give some impression of the varied approaches under consideration.

(1) Article prepared by United Nations Drafting Committee for inclusion in a Declaration:

'Individual freedom of thought and conscience, to hold or change beliefs, is an absolute and sacred right. The practice of private or public worship, religious observances, and manifestations of differing convictions can be subject only to such limitations as are necessary to protect public order, morals, and the rights and freedoms of others'.

(2) Article proposed by United Kingdom for inclusion in a Convention and accepted also as an alternative text for the Declaration:

'Every person shall be free to hold any religious or other belief dictated by his conscience and to change his belief. Every person shall be free to practice, either alone or in community with other persons or like mind, any form of religious worship and observance, subject only to such restrictions, penalties or liabilities as are strictly necessary to prevent the commission of acts which offend laws passed in the interests of humanity and morals, to preserve public order, and to ensure the rights and freedoms of other persons.

'Subject only to the same restrictions, every person of full age and sound mind shall be free to give and receive any form of religious teaching and to endeavour to persuade other persons of full age and sound mind of the truth of his beliefs, and in the case of a minor the parent or guardian shall be free to determine what religious teaching he shall receive.'

(3) Article submitted by the United States for a Declaration:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of information, speech, and expression; to freedom of religion, conscience, and belief; to freedom of assembly and of association; and to freedom to petition his Government and the United Nations.'

(4) Article submitted by the United States for a Convention:

'Everyone shall have the right to freedom of religion, conscience and belief, including the right, either alone or in community with other persons of like mind, to hold and manifest any religious or other belief, to change his belief, and to practice any form of religious worship and observance.'

"Encouragement may be found in the fact that the nations have undertaken the highly significant work of drafting an International Bill of Human Rights. This attempt is without precedent in history. At the same time, any disposition to optimism must be tempered by a realistic understanding of the many difficulties to be surmounted before this movement can be successful."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Equal Treatment of Religion

A group of well known Protestant leaders of the United States called on President Truman at the White House and discussed with him various subjects, relating to a just and durable peace and equal treatment of all religious groups by the Government. Those who made up the delegation included Dr. W.E. Garrison, associate editor of "The Christian Century", representing the Disciples of Christ; Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of New York, formerly President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ; Dr. Edward Dahlberg, President of the Northern Baptist Convention, and Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary of the Federation Council of Churches.

A statement released shortly after the visit by the delegation reads as follows:

"The delegation understands that the President strongly feels a need for the united support of all the moral and religious forces of the nation and of the world in his efforts to secure a just and durable peace. With this position the delegation expressed its complete accord.

"The delegation pointed out that equal treatment of all religious groups by the Government, insofar as it has relation with them, is essential to such united support by them. With this conviction the President expressed his agreement.

"The delegation left with the President certain suggestions which it believed would insure the attainment of this end. The President stated that he would take these suggestions under careful consideration.

"Meanwhile, the President reaffirmed his statement, made to the delegation on June 5, 1946 that the appointment of Mr. Myron C. Taylor (as the President's personal ambassador to the Vatican) was a temporary expedient."

E.P.S. Geneva

WEST INDIES

Latin American Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion

"The Living Church", organ of the Episcopal Church of America (Nov. 16, 1947) contains a report on the meeting of bishops which took place recently in Puerto Rico, from which we quote:

"Bishops from missionary jurisdictions of the Episcopal Church in Latin America recently met for the second time in history with bishops of the autonomous Anglican Province of the West Indies." The conference was attended by eleven bishops, representing the missionary districts of Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Southern Brazil of the American Church, and the dioceses of Nassau, Honduras, Jamaica, Antigua, Barbados, and British Guiana of the Church of the West Indies.

The conference opened with a quiet day, consisting of four meditations. This short retreat was followed by three days of study and discussion of subjects taken from those which will appear on the agenda of the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church, in 1948.

E.P.S. Geneva

AUSTRALIA

Primate of Australia

The Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. H.W.K. Mowll, has been elected to succeed the late Dr. Le Fanu as Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia. Dr. Mowll has been acting Primate since last year.

E.P.S. Geneva

PACIFIC ISLANDS

Missionary Ships

For hundred years there has been a ship called the "John Williams" sailing the South Pacific. To keep contact with the widely scattered island

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Episcopal News

https://archive.org/details/eni-bulletin_1947-12-12_14_44

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groups where their work is going on, the London Missionary Society, like the Melanesian Mission further west in the same ocean with their "Southern Cross" requires a ship of its own. It sails between Fiji, Samoa, Niue, and the Ellice and Gilbert Islands, conveying missionaries and island pastors and teachers, carrying food, building supplies, medicines, school material. Often it is the only means for gathering children who are to have higher education to one centre, and for taking them home again.

The present ship, the "John William VII" is soon to be discarded after seventeen years of service. Her repair and maintenance charges are heavy and she has proved too slow and too small for her task. The London Missionary Society has bought a new Diesel-driven ship of 300 tons, and the hope is that, with a larger cruising range, she will be able to serve also the Society's work in New Guinea, the Cook Islands, as well as other groups.

The children of the Churches which support the London Missionary Society in Britain, Australia and New Zealand are being asked to meet the cost of this purchase. They have kept the other ships afloat by their annual gifts all these years. And the Society confidently looks for this new generation of Christian children to be equally responsive.

Another missionary ship, the "Morning Star VI" will ply back and forth among the Marshalls and Carolines. This is the sixth "Morning Star" to be sent since 1856 by the American Board of Foreign Missions; like the first four it is a sailing vessel.

E.P.S. Geneva

NIGERIA

Children's Church at Onitsha

At Onitsha, Nigeria, there is a special church for children. It is called St. Christopher's. Sometimes 2,000 children attend the services and many cannot get inside the church. The children do all the cleaning of the church, decorate it with pictures and collect money to pay expenses.

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAIN

Medicine and the Church

An interesting development in cooperation between medical practitioners and the Christian ministry has recently been brought about by the establishment of the Church's Council of Healing. The project has the approval of the British Medical Association, which recognised the value of religious ministrations as an important element in promoting recovery in various cases of illness.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

New Title of the Mennonite Church

Delegates to the quadrennial session of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church voted at Potsdam, O. on November 17, 1947 to change the name of their denomination to that of the United Missionary Church.

The Pennsylvania Annual Conference, which voted against the change, will continue to use the title "Mennonite Brethren in Christ."

E.P.S. Geneva

BELGIUMTowards a Protestant Missionary Council

On October 25, 1947 representatives of almost all the Churches and Protestant organisations in Belgium met together, in response to an invitation from the Rev. H. W. Coxhill, General Secretary of the Protestant Missions in the Belgian Congo, the head chaplain van Goethem and Pastor E. Hoyois, President of the Council of the Belgian Protestant Missionary Society in the Congo.

The Rev. H.W. Coxhill took the chair at this meeting. After welcoming the representatives from the Churches, he described the aim of the meeting and stressed the responsibility of Belgian Protestantism for the Church of Christ in the Congo, which has over a million members.

He reminded his audience that next year it would be seventy years since the first missionaries began their work in the Congo, and expressed the hope that this anniversary would be commemorated in a worthy manner. He then passed on to four questions which were to be discussed that afternoon: 1) Propaganda; 2) Vocation; 3) Preparation; 4) the formation of a committee to work out the practical implications of the creation of a Belgian Missionary Council.

After an interesting discussion, the participants declared themselves unanimously in favour of creating this Belgian Protestant Missionary Council. All the Churches and organisations will be consulted about the project and will be invited to nominate their official delegates. E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYProtestants Suffering from Racial Persecution

Some 14,000 Protestants, who were affected by the Nazi racial laws and had to live in the Third Reich as second-class citizens under the most wretched conditions, are now being looked after by the "Evangelische Hilfsstelle" for former victims of racial persecution. This section of the population is hit particularly hard by the present distress, because their reserves of health were exhausted already before the defeat of Germany. The Hilfsstelle is trying to relieve the greatest distress by means of gifts from foreign countries. Its work is due to the initiative of Pastor Heinrich Grüber of Berlin. E.P.S. Geneva

Bibles for Germany

Supplying Germany with Bibles, New Testaments and Scriptures is still one of the urgent tasks of spiritual and church reconstruction in that country (see EPS No. 12). Part of the pulp sent by the American Bible Society has already enabled the Bible Society in Stuttgart to print 400,000 Testaments and Psalm-books. These have been divided between the different regional Bible Societies, Hilfswerk, the Home Mission organisations, the youth movements, the Protestant bookshops and other interested groups. The former "Prussian Main Bible Society" - at present known as the "Evangelische Hauptbibelgesellschaft" - hopes very shortly to be able to ask the "Evangelische

Verlagsanstalt" (the only Protestant publishing house authorised in the Russian Zone) to publish an important edition of Testaments. Meanwhile the Bible Society in Stuttgart has published an edition of over 250,000 Bibles, thanks to the binding material sent from America.

Consignments continue to arrive from abroad. A first lot of 36,000 Testaments, printed in Finland for the British and American Bible Societies, will shortly be sent to Germany. The American Bible Society announces that it is sending immediately 50,000 Bibles, and in the near future 125,000 Bibles, in addition to four consignments of 50,000 Testaments which are in course of preparation.

The Swedish Bible Society has collected funds which enabled it to send 105 tons of pulp into the Russian Zone, for the printing of Bibles. Additional contributions from other Nordic Bible Societies are still expected.

The British and Foreign Bible Society, assisted by the National Scottish Bible Society, is preparing an edition of 200,000 German Bibles, which it is hoped to send in instalments, beginning next Spring.

Thus the total number sent to Christians in Germany will amount to about 1 1/2 million Bibles, 2 1/2 million Testaments, 1 1/2 million Scriptures. The lowest estimates of Germany's immediate requirements were 4 million Bibles and 6 million Testaments. E.P.S.Geneva

GERMANY

Help to Refugees - an Ecumenical Task

At the suggestion of Bishop Hanns Lilje, the Evangelical Academy in Hermannsburg arranged a discussion at the end of October with representatives of refugees concerning the task of the Churches in overcoming distress among refugees.

The leading motive of the conversation was Bishop Lilje's realisation that all Christians are pilgrims here on earth, whether they have a country which they call their own, or whether they are homeless. Christians realise this fact all the more forcibly now, because the age of bourgeois security has given place to one of general insecurity, in which security can only be found in Christ. This realisation led the Bishop to appeal to people at home, and to refugees alike, to bear witness boldly in the Christian Churches of their unity with one another, and to act as pioneers in building bridges of understanding between the two different sections of the population. This is an essential task of the Christian community, to go forward and develop plans for housing, employment and social care, and thus help to solve this difficult problem.

In Hermannsburg a fundamentally theological realisation received practical fulfilment through faith and friendship. The Lutheran Church of the Province of Hanover is arranging for refugees to be represented on their Synod by a proportionate number of members.

The refugee settlement at Vilbel organised by Evangelisches Hilfswerk is another example of the practical result of this fundamental attitude towards refugees. In Vilbel, just outside Frankfurt, a settlement has been built for refugees from the East of Germany, the Sudetenland and South East Europe, in which the Christian community and the civic community cooperate together on a Christian basis. At present 160 men are working to erect 19 houses for 60 families. Pastor Freudenberg, member of the Refugee Commission of the World Council of Churches, has taken over the management of this settlement and has great confidence in its future, which should do much to overcome distress among refugees and to rebuild community life in Germany on democratic lines.

E.P.S. Geneva

BELGIUMVoluntary Preachers

Throughout the war the Belgian Missionary Church was able to maintain services in all its branches, even the smallest, thanks to its numerous voluntary preachers. Now that there is no lack of pastors, there is less need for voluntary preachers. But it is hoped that they will turn their energies towards the task of converting unbelievers. For this purpose a special course called the "School of Christian Service" has just been instituted under Pastor Fernand Barte, Dean of the Belgian pastors. In future these lay preachers will be well trained and will be able without fear to meet the growing intellectual demands of their Protestant hearers.

E.P.S. Geneva

DENMARKFiftieth Anniversary of the Christian
Movement among Schoolboys

On December 6 and 8, the Christian Movement among Schoolboys in Denmark celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The movement owes its origin to the pious Count Moltke and began its life under the spiritual leadership of Olfert Ricard, through whose energy it spread all over the country. Its influence was decisive during the critical boyhood years of many men who occupy important positions in Denmark today. This movement is characterised by the fact that it has no special organisation, no definite membership, and only works in loose connection with the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.; it is unconfessional but clearly Christian. The local groups have regular meetings of different kinds, and frequent Bible courses.

The summer camps organised by the Movement are well attended. It has also been publishing an excellent periodical for 36 years. It has a man and a woman travelling-secretary who keep the local groups in touch with one another throughout the year.

Since 1897 the Movement has undoubtedly realised its biblical basis much more deeply. In addition to its contacts with the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. it feels itself to have much in common with the World's Student Christian Federation and takes active part in the ecumenical movement as a whole.

E.P.S. Geneva

